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Ms Carly Marsden
Headteacher
Nanpean Community Primary School
St Georges Road
St Austell
PL26 7YH

Dear Ms Marsden

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Nanpean Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 January 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- strengthen the school improvement plan by inserting termly checks on the progress and standards achieved by all pupils
- the plan should also include, opportunities for periodic, external reports that provide governors with an independent view of the impact of actions taken to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching
- appoint a substantive Chair of the Governing Body so that governance is strengthened and better able to support school leaders in driving up standards.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, three senior leaders and four governors. A telephone call was held with a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. A number of documents were reviewed including the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings and monitoring records of local authority visits. A short visit to every class was conducted to observe learning and to talk to pupils about the mathematics work in their books.

Context

Since the last full inspection in September 2014 one teaching assistant and one governor have left the school. Three teaching assistants have been appointed.

Main findings

The headteacher's work to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, evident in the last full inspection report, has continued purposefully. Her realistic and honest view of the school's performance accurately reflects their current standing on the journey to becoming a good school. School leaders and governors now focus more precisely on teaching and its impact on learning when undertaking monitoring activities. The information gained from these activities is being used well to plan appropriate training opportunities for staff. The findings from the last full inspection have been embedded into the school improvement plan. Planned actions link well to the school's regular monitoring to ensure improvement in the achievement of the most able pupils and to the pace and depth of learning in lessons. The headteacher recognises that through the use of termly checks on the progress and standards achieved by pupils and occasional independent reports, governors would be better placed to evaluate the impact of actions to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.

Training for middle leaders by the local authority officer is helping to raise their expectations of themselves and other staff. They now use a broader range of evidence to judge the performance of staff and pupils' achievement over time. At the same time, middle leaders' regular involvement in the scrutiny of pupils' work is starting to iron out differences in performance between classes, subjects and year groups. It is also helping to improve their skills in evaluating learning. As a result teaching and learning are improving because middle leaders hold an increasingly accurate view of their area of responsibility and the school's wider performance. They are successfully contributing to longer term developments so that improvements can be sustained.

Improvements to the quality of teaching are evident in many classes. The introduction of time for pupils to respond to teachers' comments about their work is

developing pupils' understanding so they know exactly what they need to do to improve. This in turn is enabling them to make better progress, particularly in writing. A new approach to planning sequences of lessons is helping teachers match activities to pupils' different abilities more closely. For example, Year 2 pupils are supported well when solving mathematical problems using ordinal numbers. The class teacher's accurate questioning is developing pupils' mathematical reasoning more deeply and resulting in good gains in their conceptual understanding of place value.

Governors have responded positively to the inspection findings. There is a clear sense of urgency and understanding of the pace of change required to improve the achievement of the most able pupils and the pace of learning in lessons. Governors' use of the Ofsted survey report 'Outstanding governance, learning from the best' has been effective in identifying training needs, particularly in monitoring the work of the school. As a result all governors are now engaged in a broader range of first hand monitoring activities. By linking their monitoring closely to the school improvement plan governors are kept right up-to-date with the progress of actions taken by school leaders to improve teaching and pupils' achievement. Governors are aware that the recruitment of a substantive chair would enable them to support school leaders in driving up standards more effectively.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school is being well supported by the local authority. The brokering of an Interim Chair of the Governing Body pending the appointment of a permanent chair has been successful. His educational background and experience of governance is helping governors understand their roles and responsibilities more precisely. Support offered through visits to local schools is helping the headteacher understand how to monitor effectively and record more precisely how improvements to teaching are making a difference to pupils' achievement. Comprehensive and detailed feedback following visits by the local authority officer provide precise examples of strengths and weaknesses in each year group which governors can easily draw upon and follow up.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cornwall.

Yours sincerely

Richard Light
Her Majesty's Inspector